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ABSTRACT

This digest includes several articles relating to perceived gender differences among early adolescents. "Middle School Voices on Gender Identity" (Cynthia Mee) describes a study in which 2,000 middle school students in grades five through eight were interviewed with a 52-item open-ended questionnaire. Three statements from the questionnaire were the focus: The best thing about my gender, the worst thing about my gender, and the biggest difference between the sexes. Both boys and girls thought that boys can do more, are viewed as better, have different expectations, and have different restrictions. Boys thought of themselves as having a great deal to enjoy just by being a boy. They found little problem with being a boy and saw the biggest difference between the sexes as biological, with different biological restrictions and expectations. Girls struggled to find good things to say about being a girl and easily identified a variety of negative aspects. Eleven recommendations are made for teachers. Other articles are: "Looking Back--Toward a Practice of Courage" (Annie G. Rogers), and "A Positive Sense of Self for Girls with Disabilities" (Harilyn Rousso). Also included are a list of resource organizations and a list of WEEA resources for middle schools. (JBJ)

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Middle School Voices on Gender Identity

By Dr. Cynthia S. Mee, National-Louis University

It was apparent that the girls really had to struggle to respond to the best thing about being a girl.

Between 1991 and 1992 I interviewed 2,000 middle school students in grades five through eight in 15 schools in New York City and in the states of Illinois, Wisconsin, Florida, California, and Ohio. Because young adolescents sometimes answer questions with what they think the teacher or other adult wants to hear, I used a 52-item open-ended "statementaire" to encourage them to express their views honestly, in their own language and in their own voices, on a variety of topics. Although I selected many of the items of inquiry, the students and classroom teachers in the pilot research provided additional topics.

My goal was to identify, among middle level students, trends of thought that would act as indicators of interests to help educators create a curriculum to address middle school students' thoughts regarding school, life issues, and the culture of young adolescents. This article will focus on three of the statements from the statementaire: *The best thing about my gender*, *The worst thing about my gender*, and *The biggest difference between the sexes*.

The responses to these three statements mirror the results in *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America*,[1] the findings of Carol Gilligan, Nona P. Lyons, and Trudy J. Hanmer,[2] and those of Carol Gilligan and Lyn Mikel Brown[3] in their work with young adolescent girls.

The 10 to 15 age range and the differences between genders were reflected in the responses, especially when viewed through Piaget's theory on the development of cognitive thinking. Piaget's theory identifies four basic levels of cognitive development: sensorimotor (birth through about 2 years of age), operational (between 2 and 7 years of age), concrete operational (lasting from 7 to around 12 years of age), and formal operational (from around 12 years of age). It is important to remember that each child enters these stages at her or his own rate and that within each classroom children may be at very different levels.

The best thing about my gender

Fifth through eighth grade girls demonstrated hesitancy and difficulty when responding to this statement during the class dialogue. Few if any girls' hands rose to respond and their body language, as they sat slumped in the seat, heads down, eyes looking at the floor, was almost unanimous. It took some encouragement to pull verbal responses from the girls. Common responses, both verbal and written, included: *I don't know. Can't think of any. Nothing. A better selection of clothes. Being pretty. We don't have to go to war. Boys. Going shopping. Having babies. Don't have to do boy things. Fool around with hair and make-up. I can look sexy. Being delicate. Men treat you well and always think of you first. Don't have to pay for dates. Having* Seventeen *and* YM *to help us in our daily lives, the women's movement, and defending ourselves by telling guys to get a life. Loving and caring. We're noticeable and provocative.*

The blank faces of the girls in class were paralleled by the abundance of blank spaces on their statementaires. It was apparent that the girls really had to struggle to respond to the best thing about being a girl.

Meanwhile, during the open dialogue the boys were most eager to respond. Sitting on the edge of their seats, with their chairs tipping forward and their hands wildly waving, saying, "I know, I know,"

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Middle school voices . . . continued

the boys eagerly waited for me to call on them. Often they just yelled out their responses. Sad to say there is no exaggeration in this description or the comparison of the boys' and girls' responses to *The best thing about my gender.* It was clear the boys thought that distinct advantages and comfort exist if you are a boy. Unfortunately, the girls thought so too.

Being able to play lots of sports. Everything. I'm tough. I'm strong. I don't have to wear a dress. We get to do things that girls don't get to do.

I first experienced this reaction in a seventh grade class; at the time I thought it unique, but in the next class, in the next hour, on the same day, in same school, the same thing happened. Without fail, the same reaction occurred in all grades, in all the schools, in every city and state. The responses that the boys were so quick to give fell under two categories: "We can do more things" and, most common, "Not being a girl."

In each class dialogue this last response was met with laughter, including that of teachers, whose reactions tended to parallel those of their students. The girls did not appear to view this response as unexpected or humorous. In some classes girls would even say, "I know what boys think is the best thing about being a boy; it's not being a girl."

Other than the "I don't know" and "Nothing" responses from the girls, the next most common responses given by them focused on their hair, their make-up, shopping, and clothes selection. The fifth grade girls seemed most interested in their hair while the eighth grade girls favored shopping.

Don't get to have short hair. Don't know. I don't get to do boy things. Men don't think we can do anything. Guys take advantage of us. PMS. People don't take us seriously. We have to have kids. Can't play professional sports. We can never get as good a job as men.

Additional common responses given by the boys were: *Don't know. all sorts of things. Don't have to have babies. Being able to play lots of sports. Everything. I'm tough. I'm strong. I don't have to wear a dress. We get to do things that girls don't get to do. We have fun. We don't have babies. Stronger. Don't have to worry about getting pregnant. Most men explore more things. No PMS. We have more opportunities in life. We can go out and get real dirty. I have to be rude. Nice to have bikes, skateboards, and three wheeler. Making girls pregnant. Can't get pregnant.*

Boys clearly saw themselves as able to do more, be more active in sports, have more fun and more opportunities, and have sex while not worrying about getting pregnant.

The fifth grade boys focused mostly on sports and doing more things. Although the eighth grade boys were still interested in sports, puberty gave them new interests and more feelings of freedom than it gave the girls, who found themselves more restricted.

The worst thing about my gender

While girls had difficulty identifying positive aspects of being a girl, they had little difficulty in identifying negative things about being a girl. The fifth grade girls' responses indicated that their physical appearance and their biological processes are concrete issues. As the girls mature and enter Piaget's formal operational level of cognitive development they become more abstract in their thinking about gender issues. They are beginning to realize that they are treated differently, perceived differently, that they experience different expectations, and have different responsibilities in life.

On the other hand, when boys were asked to respond to *The worst thing about my gender* they most commonly responded "Nothing" or "I can't think of anything." At the same time as the girls are feeling lots of "worst" things the boys are feeling very confident and comfortable with their role of being a boy.

Some frequent responses from the girls included: *Don't get to have short hair. Don't know. I don't get to do boy things. Men don't think we can do anything. Guys take advantage of us. PMS. People don't take us seriously. We have to have kids. Can't play professional sports. We can never get as good a job as men. I have to be home at a certain time. Being ladylike. Being proposed to. Having to wear dresses and pantyhose. People don't think we are as good as boys. Pregnancy. Growing up. People are sexist and think women can't succeed in life. The stereotype that men are better than women. The monthly cycle. Dirty jokes about women. Getting treated unequally.*

Recurring responses from the boys included: *The girls pick on us. Some girls don't like boys. Can't do a cartwheel. I have to go last. I can't have a girl as a friend. We do all the work. Overworked. It hurts to get kicked you know where. Nothing, it's awesome. Puberty comes slow. Different thoughts. We are always at fault. Nothing like being a boy. There isn't one. I am not real strong. Pressure. Want to have fun with each other. Teachers favor girls, contrary to surveys. Males are expected to do more work. We usually die earlier. People blame us for stuff.*

The fifth grade boys, like the fifth grade girls, view the worst things about their gender as concrete things such as physical pain (getting picked on and getting kicked). As the boys enter the formal operational level of cognitive development they see their gender as having a more difficult work load. But the most common response for the worst thing about being a boy was "Nothing."

The biggest difference between the sexes

For the girls the biggest difference between the sexes varies greatly by age group. Fifth grade girls, again, see the difference in concrete terms. As the girls turn 11 and 12 their answers become a little more abstract: *Rights. The way we think. Boys are mean and girls are sometimes nice. They can't usually get along. Men think they are better than women. The attitudes. Male ego. The way we view things. Boys act cool. Actions. Boys seem to get*

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Looking back—toward a practice of courage

By Dr. Annie G. Rogers, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Excerpted from Rogers, Annie G., "Voice, Play, and a Practice of Ordinary Courage in Girls' and Women's Lives," Harvard Educational Review, 63:3, pp. 265-295. Copyright © 1993 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. All rights reserved.

When courage is linked to one of its oldest meanings in the English language, "to speak one's mind by telling all one's heart," the embodied or ordinary courage of 8- to 12-year-old girls becomes readily visible and audible. Yet the courage of girls has been rendered all but nonexistent over the centuries as the word came to signify the bravery and heroic valor of men, so that neither men nor women were likely to discern the courage of girls. This cultural loss is reflected by a developmental loss of ordinary courage that occurs in many girls' lives in early adolescence.

At this time in their development, some girls begin to forget the ordinary courage they experienced in relationships as children. In early adolescence, these girls invent a "cover story" and a "cover girl" to go with their stories—the girl who has no bad thoughts or feelings, but who is always nice and kind.[1] At this time in their lives, these girls speak about feeling abandoned or betrayed by women and stop saying what they really think and feel. Girls who give up authentic relationships try to sustain an anemic shadow of these relationships in the service of becoming good women: women who are "sensitive," "caring," women who would never "hurt anyone." They enter conventions of feminine goodness by cutting off the breath in their bodies, effectively disguising their feelings when they speak. These girls also silence themselves, deliberately choosing not to speak about what they know. This self-silencing, used at first as a political strategy of self-protection, slips over into a psychological resistance—the disconnection of one's own experience from consciousness.[2] Then the silence or amnesia of the unconscious erases the memory of the struggle for voice and conscious knowledge. Although these girls convincingly appear to be doing quite well in schools—they report getting good grades, becoming less impulsive and more mature, and acquiring more "self-confidence"—they also report "losing weight," feeling "depressed" or "numb" or "out of touch." Moreover, at times they seem unable to know and name their feelings and thoughts clearly.[3]

Girls who show this pattern are not simply victims of a society and a school system that undermine their belief in the reality of their own experience. These girls actively struggle to protect themselves. When they no longer feel welcomed as themselves in their relationships—with all their love, anger, and authenticity intact—then, in order to preserve some vital connection with themselves, the girls make a move to prevent a kind of self-murder. The "true I," the self who spoke a full range of feelings in detailed transparency, begins to see and hear double—to watch and listen to herself in her own terms, while at the same time comparing this knowledge of herself with what is named "reality" in her family and school. This fragmentation and muffling of voice means a loss of embodied feelings, the loss of a sense that courage can be quite ordinary. Yet the strategies that many girls growing into women adopt to live in androcentric culture are deeply self-preservative, for the deliberate move into hiding actually protects against the death of the "true I." The "true I" becomes an elusive, ephemeral, imprisoned self. Held away from public scrutiny, this hidden self speaks to the self who acts in the world. "But when the self speaks to the self, who is speaking?" Virginia Woolf asks. "The entombed soul, the spirit driven in, in, to the central catacomb; the self that took the veil and left the world—a coward perhaps, yet, somehow beautiful, as it flits with its lanterns restlessly up and down the dark corridors."[4] From the "dark corridors" of women's diaries, dreams, and half-finished thoughts, the "true I" may potentially be recovered.

How is it possible, then, for adolescent girls and women who show this pattern of loss to recover voice and courage, to live whole, and to speak again in the world? This is a difficult process. The adolescent girls seemed to forget the memory of themselves as courageous and create another story, recalling themselves at ages from 9 to 12 as "rude" or "inappropriate," "bad" or "disturbed." These are the very words some teachers and therapists also use to describe girls who stand outside the culture's conventions of the "good girl." But the process of recovering voice and courage involves remembering another story, recalling a girl-self who was in the oldest sense of the word courageous—able to "speak her mind by telling all her heart."

Beyond the bounds of childhood, many girls and women are also understandably reluctant to bring themselves authentically into their relationships. Their courage seems suddenly treacherous, transgressive, dangerous. But the "true I" lives on in an underground world, waiting and hoping for a sign that she may emerge, whole, and open herself again. This wish is nothing short of terrifying, for it reawakens the fear of another abandonment, another shattering loss. Girls, astute observers of their mothers and teachers, seem to know when women can and cannot face squarely into a struggle with them. Unfortunately, women's reluctance to experience another loss becomes a powerful psychological defense. When women cannot enter deeply into girls' struggles for a real relationship, women are effectively saying to girls, "No, I'll not

These girls also silence themselves, deliberately choosing not to speak about what they know. This self-silencing, used at first as a political strategy of self-protection, slips over into a psychological resistance—the disconnection of one's own experience from consciousness.

Toward a practice of courage . . . continued

risk being truthful with you; I will distance myself from you because I can't stay close to you any longer." Thus the defense—the story of inevitable loss and betrayal designed to protect from repeated losses—repeats itself generation after generation, handed down unconsciously from women to girls, from mothers to daughters.

But what of the girls who are living in the world now as they are coming of age and facing a real crisis of courage? In my collaborative preventive and clinical work with girls, the hope of sustaining girls' courage is present moment by moment in the struggle for real relationship. This is what I call a practice of courage. This practice involves the art of being playful and outspoken, and of being a vulnerable and staunch fighter—someone who transgresses the conventions of feminine goodness. To engage in this practice would upset the structures of formal education that preserve the status quo of our society. If girls and women were to say in school what they know to be true, the inequities and the neglect of girls in our educational system would become much clearer, and also more poignant and disturbing.

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Discovering this practice of courage is not a matter of good intentions. Instead, it seems to require a skilled listening, a way of listening now supported by empirical studies of girls' experiences. When I speak and listen to girls I am always seeking to get under the surface of what is being said—listening for the "true I," the voice of the girl who knows and describes her experience through a full range of feelings, who can tell the story of her life and her relationships in detailed transparency. This listening is difficult because a girl's voice may suddenly shift into indirect, coded speech that is hard to follow, or may get quickly covered over by conventions she wants to believe and may want me to believe too.

To learn this practice of courage with girls and women we need time and space to breathe freely, to be vulnerable, to speak honestly with one another. This means having time in the structure of our work as teachers or as psychologists to engage in this kind of relationship. It also means breaking traditional and time-honored conventions of feminine goodness to create a new order or logic of relationships between women and girls.

Notes

[1] L. Brown, *Narratives of Relationship: The Development of a Care Voice in Girls Ages 7 to 16* (Monograph No. 8) (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Project on Women's Psychology and Girls' Development, 1989); L. Brown and C. Gilligan, *Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's Psychology and Girls' Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992).

[2] C. Gilligan, "Joining the Resistance: Psychology, Politics, Girls and Women," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 29 (1990): 501–536; A. Rogers, L. Brown, and M. Tappan, "Interpreting Loss in Ego Development in Girls: Regression or Resistance?" in *The Narrative Study of Lives*, ed. by R. Josselson and A. Lieblich (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1993).

[3] Brown and Gilligan, *Meeting at the Crossroads*; Rogers, Brown, and Tappan, "Interpreting Loss in Ego Development in Girls: Regression or Resistance?"

[4] V. Woolf, *A Haunted House and Other Stories* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1944), 19. (Original work published 1921) ◆

Additional resource organizations

American Association of University Women (AAUW)
1111 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 785-7700

Carnegie Corporation of New York
Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative
437 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022
(212) 371-3200

Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)
1 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001-1431
(202) 408-5505

Edna McConnell Clark Foundation
Program for Disadvantaged Youth
250 Park Avenue, Suite 900
New York, NY 10177-0026
(212) 551-9100

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20208-5720
(202) 219-2289

Girls Incorporated
National Resource Center
441 West Michigan Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202
(317) 634-7546

Lilly Endowment Inc.
Middle Grades Improvement Program
P.O. Box 88068
Indianapolis, IN 46208
(317) 924-5471

National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE)
1012 Cameron Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 684-4000

National Black Child Development Institute
1023 15th Street, NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 387-1281

National Coalition for Sex Equity in Education (NCSEE)
One Redwood Drive
Clinton, NJ 08809
(908) 735-5045

National Middle School Association (NMSA)
2600 Corporate Exchange Drive, Suite 370
Columbus, OH 43231
(614) 895-4730; (800) 528-NMSA

Middle school voices . . . continued

everything. Men think women stay at home, clean house, and take care of kids.

By 13 and 14 years of age, the girls express: *It's a man's world. PMS. Girls have a fashion sense, boys don't. Opportunities. Guys get paid more. Men mainly think they are more important and are really hogs. How we act. It's a man's world. Guys can fool around in class and it's no problem socially, just considered dorks but girls are considered barbarous if we fool around and are called ditsy. Boys act like they are cool and that girls act simple. They each value different things. Women are more sensitive and men are a good distraction. Women's lib.*

For the boys the biggest difference between the sexes, again, differs according to the age group. The fifth grade boys, like the girls, look at the concrete. The pubescent boys in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades view the difference in very concrete terms of sexuality: *Girls have breasts. The bodies. Boys don't have a period. Girls have curves, boys don't. The girls are stuck up. The girls think they are so mature. The girls have to worry about getting pregnant.*

The boys used a variety of derogatory terms to refer to the body, especially when referring to girls' body parts. A few girls' responses described the differences between the sexes in terms of body parts, but not one girl used a street term to express it.

Occasionally some seventh and eighth grade boys' thoughts included: *Girls have different feelings about things. The way we view things. Attitudes. Making love. Emotions. Boys don't have a period. I'm the man.* The 12- to 13-year-old boys in this research definitely viewed the biggest difference between the sexes as physical.

Summary

Both the boys and the girls thought that boys can do more, are viewed as better, have different expectations, and have different restrictions. The boys thought of themselves as having a great deal to enjoy just by being a boy. They found little problem with being a boy and saw the biggest difference between the sexes as biological, with different biological restrictions and expectations.

The dramatic gender perceptions in this study parallel those in Linda Riley, Lorayne Baldus, Melissa Keyes, and Barbara Schuler's replication of the Colorado study *My Daddy Might Have Loved Me.*[4] The Riley et al.[5] study, titled *My Worst Nightmare*, echoes the earlier study. Although most of the girls and boys in *My Worst Nightmare* were satisfied with their gender and would not want to change, both genders did think that boys' lives were easier and more fun while girls' lives included more responsibilities, were more serious, and that girls had more to worry about, including appearance, relationships, pregnancy, and world peace.[6]

The girls in my study struggled to find good things about being a girl and easily identified a variety of negative aspects; they were very aware of society's different expectations of and the responsibilities imposed on each sex. The average middle school girl thinks that boys can do more now and that they will continue to be able to do more as they grow up, they will have higher status career expectations, they will get paid more, and will have more fun and less domestic responsibilities.

The pubescent boys in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades view the difference in very concrete terms of sexuality.

Middle school students are at the turning point of their lives and it is important that both our girls and our boys have the opportunities to develop fully as individuals. Educators are responsible for helping them succeed and can start by understanding their needs as perceived by the young adolescents themselves. If teachers can read these middle school quotes, explore their own thoughts about these statements, listen to their own students' voices, and create a plan of action to address them, then avenues of communication will open that should encourage mutual respect.

The worst thing educators can do is to pretend there aren't problems and to continue to do things "the way things have always been done." Society's changing views and attitudes regarding appropriate gender behaviors send mixed messages to young adolescent students. It is particularly confusing for these adolescents because they are engaged also in a developmental stage of identification. Both male and female young adolescents want help in this process, they won't ask for it, but they want it, and they know they need it.

The voices of the young adolescents in this study have clearly spoken their perceptions of gender and the reality of those perceptions for them. Their thoughts must not be taken lightly. It is important for educators to ask what their students think about gender issues and then to validate their thoughts by openly addressing them in classes and curricula.

A few girls' responses described the differences between the sexes in terms of body parts, but not one girl used a street term to express it.

Recommendations for teachers

When male teachers sit only with male teachers and female teachers sit only with female teachers in the lunchroom and during assemblies and meetings, they are modeling unintentional, subtle behaviors and attitudes that perpetuate gender bias. This kind of behavior demonstrates to students how adults are expected to behave and so has great significance in the eyes of a young adolescent. The following recommendations offer many opportunities for teachers to model and encourage gender equitable behaviors:

Be aware of the research on gender issues in schools. Include your students in a dialogue regarding their thoughts and projects to help identify and address equity issues in the school and the curriculum.

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Address harassing behaviors between genders and within genders.

Involve your students in their learning process; have the curriculum evolve from them. Listen to the ideas and experiences students bring with them. Ask them what they want to learn; what they like to read about; what they like to think about; what they dream about; what they talk about. Connect their learning environment to their living environment.

Provide a diverse curriculum that exposes students to women, people of color, and people with disabilities in history, science, mathematics, and so on. Provide bibliographies that include a rich variety of authors and individuals of both sexes and of diverse cultures.

Teach media literacy and critical viewing skills. The mass media propagates misconceptions about gender, gender identification, and socialization.

Arrange mentors for middle school students to provide opportunities for work with women and men in professions nontraditional for their gender. Connect the students with male nurses, female doctors, male child care workers, female engineers, female mathematicians, homemaker dads, female architects, and so on.

Provide a wide variety of activities so both genders can discover different things they are interested in and good at. Students need an opportunity to expand their skills, talents, and interests. Exploratory programs in middle schools can expose students to new activities and new experiences.

Teach media literacy and critical viewing skills. The mass media propagates misconceptions about gender, gender identification, and socialization. Young adolescents are heavy media consumers, whether through TV, videos, music, or magazines. Much of what they learn, value, and believe is acquired through media. Students need to be able to distinguish myth from reality. Use and discuss everyday visual experiences: covers of magazines, book jackets, newspaper and magazine articles, photographs, record/tape/CD covers. Have students critique TV shows, commercial ads, situation comedies, and newscasts for how genders are represented.

Provide a wide variety of activities so both genders can discover different things they are interested in and good at.

Address harassing behaviors between genders and within genders. In addition to not tolerating harassment between genders, correct harassing and inappropriate behaviors within genders. Often girls can be mean to other girls, and boys often threaten other boys. If these behaviors are not addressed, students may think they are okay and expected. If your school does not have a harassment policy, create one, post it in every classroom, and make it a part of the student and the parent handbook. Contact your state equity coordinator for assistance.

Examine how language is used in the classroom. Use gender inclusive language and expect students to do so also. Recast sentences to avoid using "he" or "she or he," use "humankind" rather than "mankind," "chair" rather than "chairman" or "chairperson," and so on. Once teachers and students become aware of biased language, identification of bias become easier. Give students credit or kudos for recognizing other gender biased language. Have them examine the hidden messages of their textbooks.

Provide a rich array of visuals of women and men of diverse cultures active in a variety of roles for bulletin boards and class displays. The images that surround us provide overt and covert messages. Connect the world of the young adolescents to what is happening in your school and in your classroom. Encourage them to create displays, providing opportunities for choice and collaboration. Insist that students use an equal number of female authors, politicians, scientists, athletes, mathematicians, and so on.

If your school leadership is not supportive of these issues provide them with current literature and lesson plans on embracing equity issues. There are many sources of information, including your local library, bookstore, university, and local and national resource organizations.

Some of these recommendations are not easy to do. But if the faculty commits to creating a bias-free school environment, the process is exciting and teachers learn a lot along the way. We need to help both girls and boys feel better about themselves, so they can feel good about the other gender. We *can* change "boys will be boys." Let us help our children break down harmful stereotypes so they can build new, more positive models.

Notes

[1]Greenberg-Lake: The Analysis Group, *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of University Women, 1991).

[2]C. Gilligan, N. Lyons, and T. J. Hanmer, eds., *Making Connections: The Relational Worlds of Adolescent Girls at Emma Willard School* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1990).

[3]L. Mikel Brown and C. Gilligan, Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's Psychology and Girls' Development (Ballantine: New York, 1992).

[4] A. Baumgartner-Papageorgiou, *My Daddy Might Have Loved Me: Student Perceptions of Differences Between Being Male and Being Female* (Denver, Colo.: University of Colorado at Denver, 1982).

[5]L. Riley, L. Baldus, M. Keyes, and B. Schuler, *My Worst Nightmare . . . : Wisconsin Students' Perceptions of Being the Other Gender* (Menomonie, Wisc.: Center for Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education, University of Wisconsin—Stout, 1993).

[6]Riley et al., *My Worst Nightmare*, v. ◆

WEEA resources for middle schools

A-Gay-Yah: A Gender Equity Curriculum for Grades 6–12 #2735 $25.00
This exciting multicultural curriculum emphasizes critical thinking and cooperative learning, increases gender equity and cultural awareness among students, and frames gender equity within the context of Native American history and culture. For Native American students, *A-Gay-Yah* affirms a long and vital history. For all students, it clarifies complex issues of gender and race equity while increasing content expertise in key subject areas.

Add-Ventures for Girls: Building Math Confidence (Middle School) #2710 $35.00
Add-Ventures for Girls, chosen as an Exemplary Math Material by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Science, Mathematics, and Environmental Education, offers experiential exercises that help girls feel more comfortable with and more able to succeed in mathematics. Provides methods to combat the attitudinal and societal barriers that prevent girls from reaching their mathematics potential.

Equity in Education Series (set) #2761 $13.00
The four booklets that comprise the set, *Gender Equity for Educators, Parents, and Community; Gender Stereotypes: The Links to Violence; School to Work: Equitable Outcomes for Girls and Boys;* and *Gender-Fair Mathematics*, clearly and incisively describe key equity issues in education today. Drawn from the best of WEEA publications, each of the four helps users identify bias and respond to it, offers activities and other hands-on tools for use in K–12 classrooms, and responds to what classroom teachers have been asking for.

Equity Lessons for Secondary School #2433 $8.50
Focuses on personal assumptions and meaning in the lives of activist women, looking at stereotypes, the women's rights movement, and the women who worked for justice in U.S. society.

Expanding Options: Secondary Teacher #2535 $41.00; **Counselor** #2536 $36.00; **Administrator** #2537 $20.00
Professional development materials to increase teachers,' administrators,' and counselors' skill in providing gender equitable education. Each *Facilitator's Guide* gives step-by-step instructions for conducting an effective workshop for the particular target group.

Fair Play: Developing Self-Concept and Decision-Making Skills in the Middle School (set) #2498 $177.50
An innovative and effective set of interdisciplinary modules that integrates equity into science, mathematics, language arts, and physical education. Helps adolescents learn personal and group decision-making skills, how to choose and define their own roles, and to avoid the limitations of peer pressure and gender-role stereotyping.

Going Places: An Enrichment Program to Empower Students #2713 $40.00
Based on the successful San Diego model, this intensive curriculum assists schools seeking to reduce dropout rates by getting to students early. *Going Places* addresses the specific needs of potential dropouts with a focus on enrichment and hands-on, cooperative group learning; develops and builds self-esteem; improves problem-solving and decision-making skills; and develops leadership skills to help students begin high school with a successful experience.

Science EQUALS Success #2711 $20.00
Developed by the nationally recognized EQUALS Program, *Science EQUALS Success* builds on the "fun" of science, motivating girls during a critical period when many lose interest in mathematics and science. Activities are designed to be easily integrated into science classes.

Teacher Skill Guide for Combatting Sexism (set) #2169 $35.00
This series of short training modules provides quick, simple tools for identifying and handling gender bias in teacher lessons and student attitudes. Modules are organized into three phases that examine pervasive stereotypes, suggest techniques for dealing with resistance to change, and show how students can make independent career and identity decisions.

Working Papers Series
Working papers present in-depth discussions on cutting-edge issues in gender equity:
Forthcoming Summer 1995: *Gender, Discourse, and Technology* #2759 $4.00
Gendered Violence: Examining Education's Role #2758 $4.00
Teaching Mathematics Effectively and Equitably to Females #2744 $4.00
Building Self: Adolescent Girls and Self-Esteem #2745 $4.00
Legislation for Change: A Case Study of Title IX and the Women's Educational Equity Act Program #2749 $4.00

Materials may be purchased from the WEEA Publishing Center by mail or phone. Orders under $25.00 must be prepaid unless charged to MasterCard or Visa. Add shipping costs of $3.50 for the first item and $0.80 for each additional item. For a complete listing of materials and services, or to place an order, contact the WEEA Publishing Center at (800) 225-3088.

Educational Equity List

EDEQUITY (Educational Equity Discussion List) is an international Internet discussion list focusing on theory and practice of equity in education in a multicultural context. To subscribe, send the message *subscribe edequity* to MAJORDOMO@CONFER.EDC.ORG (Do not use a "subject" line.)

A positive sense of self for girls with disabilities

By Harilyn Rousso, Disabilities Unlimited Consulting Services

The following is excerpted from "Sexuality and a Positive Sense of Self for Women with Disabilities," in The Health of Women with Physical Disabilities: Setting a Research Agenda for the 90s, *edited by D. M. Krotoski, M. Nosek, and M. Turk (Baltimore, Md.: Paul H. Brookes, forthcoming 1996).*

The good news is that many young women with disabilities have become tougher and more creative in their strategies of resistance to negative assumptions about their social potential.

I recently interviewed 60 ethnically diverse adolescent girls with physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities living in the New York City area. Through a series of individual and group conversations, we explored such topics as the advantages and disadvantages of being a woman, social and sexual knowledge and experience, body image, and sexual abuse and harassment. These young women greatly impressed me with their openness and articulateness. Their key message was that they were girls first, not just the embodiments of their disabilities, and that they were more similar to than different from girls without disabilities. "Tell them we're girls!" I heard repeatedly. It is a sorry state of affairs that these young women could not take for granted widespread recognition of their womanhood.

Their report on the social scene contained both good and bad news. The bad news is that the social scene is still difficult for young women with disabilities, particularly those with visible physical disabilities. Girls with disabilities continue to be excluded, rejected, and viewed as asexual because of their failure to meet standards of physical perfection.

The good news is that many young women with disabilities have become tougher and more creative in their strategies of resistance to negative assumptions about their social potential. For example, one 14-year-old explained to me: "I may be handicapped, crippled, disabled. Whatever you think I am, I'm not. I could fight." Becoming a crackerjack fighter has been her strategy for dealing with people who stare, taunt, or reject her for having an imperfect body. Or as another young woman explains: "I gave up trying to prove myself a long time ago. Now I say, 'If you want to accept me this way, then you can. And if you don't, then to hell with you.'" Both young women recognized that the source of their exclusion and oppression was outside themselves. For them, the problem was societal prejudices, not their bodies or abilities.

Like all teenagers these girls were as likely as not to complain about their weight or breast size. And not all of them were displeased with their bodies. Some had a positive view of how they looked, disability and all, and were able to offer a rather sophisticated feminist critique of the myth of the perfect body. We might wonder what enables some young women to judge the judgments about their bodies rather than judging their bodies. Some girls attributed their positive attitudes to their parents' affirmation of their beauty and value, or to their access to impressive women with disabilities who served as role models, but many were uncertain about what enabled them to feel good; they simply did. We need to examine and understand the experiences of such girls on their own terms, using the lens of resilience rather than deviance from able-bodied norms. The results of such research will help us promote the positive social and sexual development of all girls. ◆

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